

1 A method of dispensing a product from a vending machine, comprising:  
receiving a signal from a cellular telephone;  
issuing a response to the signal which indicates that a connection has been  
established between the cellular telephone and the vending machine;  
5 receiving information indicating that the product has been selected; and  
dispensing the product in response to the information when the connection has  
been established.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

10 outputting the cost of the product; and  
debiting an account for the cost to pay for the product.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the response comprises a visual indication that  
is displayed on the cellular telephone.

15 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the response comprises an audio indication that  
is presented via the cellular telephone.

20 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the response is issued and the signal is  
received over a mobile communications network.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
monitoring an amount of the product in the vending machine; and  
outputting an indication when the vending machine is out of a product.

5     7. An apparatus for dispensing a product, comprising:  
a transceiver which receives a signal from a cellular telephone and issues a  
response to the signal which indicates that a connection has been established between the  
cellular telephone and the apparatus;  
a retrieving device which receives information indicative of the product; and  
10     a dispensing device which dispenses the product in response to the information  
and when the connection has been established.

15     8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the transceiver outputs the cost of the  
product.

20     9. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the response comprises a visual indication  
for display on the cellular telephone.

   10. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the response comprises an audio indication  
for presentation via the cellular telephone.

11. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the response is issued and the signal is received over a mobile communications network.

12. The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising:  
5 an inventory monitoring device which monitors an amount of the product in the vending machine and generates a signal indicating that the vending machine is out of the product, wherein the transceiver outputs the signal.

13. A system comprising:  
10 a communications network;  
a first communication device connected to the communications network; and  
a vending machine comprising:  
a retrieving device for obtaining a product from the vending machine;  
a second communication device connected to the communications network;  
15 and  
a dispensing device for dispensing the product from the vending machine;  
wherein the first and second communication devices establish a connection via the communications network, the connection enabling the retrieving device and the dispensing device.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the first communication device comprises a telephone.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the telephone comprises a cellular telephone.

16. The system of claim 13, wherein the second communication device comprises  
5 a transceiver.

17. The system of claim 13, wherein the communications network comprises a  
mobile radio network.

18. The system of claim 13, wherein the communications network comprises:  
10 a telephone network; and  
a gateway server that connects the vending machine to the telephone network.

19. The system of claim 13, wherein a code number is associated with the vending  
15 machine and the first communication device establishes the connection to the second  
communication device using the code number.

20. The system of claim 13, wherein the vending machine further comprises an  
inventory monitoring system for monitoring the inventory of the product.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the inventory monitoring system outputs a  
20 signal when the vending machine is out of the product.

22. The system of claim 13, further comprising a peripheral device which receives a signal from the second communication device and generates a menu in response to the signal.